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ABSTRACT

Many American schools use the televised news programs Channel One and CNN Newsroom. Channel One has received considerable scrutiny, some of it highly unfavorable, while attention to CNN Newsroom has been less extensive and mostly benign. This study compares the two programs within seven school districts in Wisconsin. The study addresses three basic areas: (1) how each district chose and implemented CNN Newsroom and Channel One; (2) how schools delivered the programs to students; and (3) how students and staff perceived the impact of a specific program on students' learning. The seven-district region examined included 22 high schools. All teachers, principals, and students received survey forms. Administrators were queried on how they made decisions, on options they took for implementation, on their familiarity with state guidelines, on whether they followed a written material selection policy, and on the rationale for their choice. Questionnaires for teachers elicited responses on their evaluation of television as a learning tool, whether they would recommend it to colleagues, on whether they required students to pay attention, on whether they used it as a basis of classroom discussion about current events, and on how they integrated the program into the curriculum. Questionnaires requested students to respond to items concerning their attention to the programs, their assessment of their learning, the integration of the programs into classroom discussions, their non-classroom sources of news, and their attention to commercials. Schools using CNN Newsroom and those using Channel One differed considerably: CNN schools had active teacher involvement in choice and administrators' strong belief in quality; Channel One schools' decisions rested with the administration and board with teacher requests playing no obvious part. For neither program did state requirements seem to carry much importance. Seven tables present study results. (Contains 37 references.) (Author/AEF)

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CHANNEL ONE AND CNN NEWSROOM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SEVEN DISTRICTS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Many American schools use the televised news programs Channel One and CNN Newsroom. Channel One has received considerable scrutiny, some of it highly unfavorable, while attention to CNN Newsroom has been less extensive and mostly benign. Regardless of breadth of attention, however, not much agreement has been reached on the overall function and importance of these recent additions to American education. One impediment to a fuller understanding may be the fact that virtually all investigations have singled out only one program, ignoring the other and thereby missing elements that are and are not unique. In this study, however, we have attempted to compare the two programs within a homogeneous geographical area at a particular time.

Focusing on selected school districts in Wisconsin, the study addresses three basic questions. The first is how districts chose and implemented CNN Newsroom and Channel One. The second is how schools actually delivered the programs to students. The third is how students and staff perceived the impact of a specific program on students' learning. In relation to impact, we have given particular attention to Channel One's use of commercials. The rural locale of the study also led us to attempt to ascertain whether any differences or similarities in the findings may be attributed to the peculiarities of the environment.

Channel One provides its users with television monitors, videocassette recorders and a satellite dish in exchange for a contractual obligation to use the program for three years (Whittle Communications, 1992). At the end of this period, the user can renew the contract or terminate it and return the equipment. Channel One broadcasts 180 days a year and requires districts to promise to use programs 90 percent of the days that schools are in session. By 1995, programs reached eight million secondary students, 40 percent of teenagers in the country (Gwynne, 1995).

Channel One provides a daily twelve minute program that includes ten minutes of news and information and two minutes—two and a half minutes in some cases—of commercials, of which public service presentations comprise 15 percent. When not using the television equipment for Channel One programs, schools may use it for any purposes they wish. In its pilot period (Haney, 1989) and early years of regular operation (Endres, Endres & Miles, 1991, and Toch, 1992), Channel One gave less attention to "hard" news than to "lifestyle" segments on film, music and other topics of particular interest to teenagers. In 1993, however, the producers altered the format and increased the news segment (Johnston, Brzezinski, and Anderman, 1994), although continuing the program's orientation toward teenage interests. With its new emphasis on "hard news"—for example, it has given extensive coverage to Bosnia, to Somalia, and to the Russian disintegration—Channel One still uses the attention-getting techniques common to MTV and films, such as sound effects added to news reports, short bursts of image, soft-focus, and slow motion.

The other program, CNN Newsroom, a division of the Turner Broadcasting System, provides a fifteen-minute commercial-free segment of news. It offers no hardware incentives to districts. Material from CNN, like that from Channel One, may be shown through videocassette recording at any time. Emphasizing the program's focus on teachers, a CNN official told a congressional committee, "We see the purpose of [CNN] very clearly as an opportunity for teachers to connect events in the real world to class discussion, reading, library research, homework, and critical thinking skills.... Our role is simply to provide the best news coverage we can produce to meet the needs of teachers" (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 34). CNN claims to base its presentation on three major assumptions about the use of video in the classroom: Its news must be supported by the written word; it must conform to the agenda of the classroom; and it must support the existing curriculum (Turner Educational Service, 1991, p. 6). CNN has used its regular

reporters, older than those used on Channel One, and generally presents longer stories, some recycled from regular CNN news broadcasts.

In some respects mystery surrounds the location of specific users of either of these corporate television programs. For reasons of confidentiality, neither has divulged the names of specific schools using the programs. In Wisconsin, both programs achieved popularity, although the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction appeared to be unaware of which districts used the programs. CNN's ratio of use was higher in Wisconsin than in the United States as a whole. In early 1993, according an official of the Turner Broadcasting System, CNN served 754 schools in the state (S. Milton, personal communication, 1993). Channel One was reported to be serving 115 (Smith, 1993). Because CNN targeted only social science classes while Channel One had large segments of the student body as its audience, the number of schools served does relate precisely to the number of students served.

Issues Explored

Information from previous studies and commentaries produced the questions on implementation, delivery and impact that guided this exploratory study. In presenting questions we give specific attention to an investigation covering a national sample of schools using Channel One during the same time period as this investigation, the final report of Johnston et al. (1994), which provides useful comparisons with certain areas of this study.

Questions on Implementation

CNN Newsroom does not involve contractual relationships, so its selection can depend more specifically on individual schools and teachers, almost always those in social studies. To bring the broadcasts into the classroom, teachers or media directors simply must arrange for school equipment, including a TV/VCR that can be programmed to record the show (Burkart, Rockman, & Ittelson, 1992, p. 11).

The contractual requirements of Channel One inevitably involve the school board and administration closely in the selection process, although teachers may initiate consideration. In some cases, however, states have restricted choice. One state has limited the program to homeroom periods. Two states have forbidden it outright (Gwynne, 1995; DeVaney, 1994, pp. 2-3). For reasons to receive attention later, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the former state superintendent have strongly recommended that districts not use it (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990; Grover, 1992; Smith, 1993). Nevertheless, Channel One's free equipment can be a substantial inducement, particularly to districts with financial difficulties, since it may be used for various purposes when it is not transmitting Channel One programs (Celano & Neuman, 1994), and Johnston et al. (1994, p. 26).

In this study, in order to clarify the implementation process we attempted to discover how each of the districts reached decisions to use one of the broadcasts and how the decisions to use CNN Newsroom differed from those to use Channel One. Why was a program chosen? Who had the most influence in making the recommendation for use? Did state selection requirements play a part? For Wisconsin, the negative attitude of the Department of Public Instruction toward Channel One gave the latter question special interest.

Questions on Delivery

To use CNN Newsroom, teachers must be willing to make an effort the secure the program and materials, duplicate tapes and teachers' guides, and distribute everything to the classrooms before the school day. A detailed field study of several sites throughout the nation indicated that teachers usually integrated the programs into their social science curricular work and led discussions after the broadcasts (Burkart et al., 1992).

No one pattern prevails for Channel One. Not limited to social science classes, it provides a wide variety of deliveries to students. Johnston et al. (1994, p. 26) have noted that student learning appeared to be maximized when the Channel was used at the beginning of an instructional period, but that this was not a common practice. In their national sample, they found that 60 per cent of schools gave the program in homerooms or other non-instructional settings, and 24 percent gave it at the beginning of a period. Despite official distaste for the program, Wisconsin has imposed no place or time requirement, leaving the decision up to individual districts. The odd times of presentation, in non-academic rooms, often in the brief period before classes, when administrative duties and other distractions are common, cast doubt on the value of Channel One's requirement that schools provide broadcasts 90 percent of the days schools are in session. It is not surprising that observers have noted that Channel One recommendations that schools integrate broadcasts into the curriculum have not often been followed (Konrad, 1992). Despite the rather random pattern of delivery, however, Johnston et al. (1994, p. 19) did find frequent offerings, with most high school teachers reporting programs four or five times a week. Moreover, 70 percent of teachers reported making a significant effort to discuss important Channel One stories with their students (pp. 19-20).

To explore delivery issues in this study, we sought answers to questions on how often the programs were used, where they were used, how they articulated with the curriculum, and how much attention they elicited from students. Both teachers and students provided their assessment.

Questions on the Value and Impact of the Programs

The third series of questions concerned the overall value and impact of the programs. CNN Newsroom has received strong endorsement from professional organizations in education, virtually all of which have expressed criticism of Channel One. Early reports reveal that most of those districts using the programs expressed a high degree of satisfaction (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991). Empirical evidence of CNN's impact on students remains limited, but the multi-site study by Burkhart et al. (1992) did suggest the effectiveness of the program in giving students knowledge of world events, geography, history and vocabulary, as well as in enhancing "thinking skills." Few criticisms of the quality of the program have emerged, although the entire CNN news enterprise has drawn attacks for its ostensibly mild treatment of Iraq during the Gulf War.

Channel One has many attackers. Especially during its formative period, it drew much criticism for its low intellectual content (Davis, 1992; Donnelly, 1992). A CNN spokesperson contrasted Channel One to CNN by asserting that CNN did not "dumb down" the news (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 49). The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction had asserted that the program was not "instructionally effective" and that news material from a single source provided on a daily basis had "a high potential for bias" (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1990). Sometimes, as a result of its coverage of such issues as condom use, its influence on the morals and behavior of students also came under fire (Getting plugged into the news, 1992).

Yet the program also received considerable praise for providing information otherwise unavailable to students in school (Rudiman, 1990, Wulfmeyer & Muller, 1991). Under its newer format, which places much greater emphasis on major news, it has gained highly favorable publicity. It won the Peabody Award for its coverage of AIDS and defeated Prime Time Live to receive an award at the Chicago Film Festival (Gwynne, 1995). Johnston et al. (1994, pp. 27-28) reported that 67 percent of teachers would "strongly recommend" it to colleagues, students found it a valuable experience, and principals expressed enthusiasm.

Under old or new format, commercials constitute the most controversial aspect of Channel One, and the vitriolic opposition to commercials has undoubtedly affected assessments of the value of the news function. Many individuals and groups, including virtually all of the educational professional organizations and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (1990) have decried the use of commercials in instructional programs. Although some attacks have come from the values-oriented right, one group of which attempted to launch a boycott because of the behavior and "slinky outfits" of three female singers in a Pepsi commercial (Pepsi ad on Channel One leads to boycott, 1992), most attacks on commercials have come from liberals. The program has been accused of contributing to problems of public health and global pollution (Rank, 1992) and of constituting a "sinister attempt by the right to convert students into a 'retail product'" (Apple, 1993, p 116). Many teachers and administrators, however, have praised the program, asserting that its benefits outweighed the alleged harm of commercials (Rudinow, 1990; Carlin, 1992; Tiene, 1993). Johnston et al. (1994, p. 96) reported that three fourths of teachers surveyed considered commercials an adequate trade-off for what was gained.

In this investigation, we sought to determine the value of the programs as perceived by teachers and students. We questioned teachers on the benefit of their program as a teaching tool, their willingness to recommend the program to colleagues, and their view of its contribution to student knowledge. Questions to students concerned their learning and the related issues of their exposure to outside sources of news. We asked students who viewed Channel One several questions on their attention to commercials.

Method

In order to secure a reasonable degree of comparison, we chose a homogeneous rural area that included districts using CNN Newsroom and those using Channel One. We chose a seven-district region encompassing three counties in a 1,000 square mile area. The selection included twenty-two high schools. According to official size designations used in the state for categorization, ten high schools were rated small (fewer than 250 students), six medium (251-600 students) and six large (more than 600 students).

One of the investigators contacted all twenty schools by telephone or personal visit. The library media director or principal at each site verified whether or not particular schools utilized the news broadcasts. Eight of the twenty schools currently did. The investigators asked principals if they were willing to participate in the study. One principal refused. The study finally included two small schools and two medium schools that subscribed to Channel One and two small schools and two medium schools that subscribed to CNN Newsroom. All seven of the schools had been using broadcast programming for at least two years and intended to continue using it.

The surrounding countryside is largely agricultural, although one district is located 13 miles from a small metropolitan area of more than 60,000 residents and another is 20 miles from a small city of 25,000 in an adjacent state. One school is in a town of slightly more than 3,000 residents. All the others are in towns with fewer than 2,100. All the

districts fit into the bottom quartile of total revenue available to local government, including school districts. All provided lower expenditure per pupil that the mean in the state. The financial problems have led all to join a rural coalition in a suit against the state, charging resources have been delivered inequitably. Most families living in the areas under investigation were of low or middle income, and minority students constituted less than 0.5 percent of the school populations.

Within the area, outside sources of information varied. Those newspapers available to students included local weeklies, dailies from the small cities on the periphery of the area, and dailies from the metropolitan areas of Wisconsin and an adjacent state. The local newspapers, which had a wider circulation than the larger ones, gave very little attention to national and international news. Radio in the area provided only short pieces of news, usually compressed between musical selections, although it also broadcast syndicated political, health, and personal-psychological advice programs. Television included the major networks, and those residents on cable could have CNN, C-Span and other sources of news.

To elicit information, we designed six separate instruments, one each for administrators, for teachers, and for students participating in CNN Newsroom and Channel One. We pretested the instruments in two other districts, not adjacent to the ones studied, before deciding on the final instrument to be used. In mid-May 1993, one of us delivered the survey forms to each media director or principal of a school that used one of the programs.

All teachers, principals, and students received survey forms, with the principal or library media director acting as contact person to ensure distribution and compilation in each school. We promised anonymity to respondents. Teachers provided the forms to their students. All forms—those from administrators, teachers, and students—were returned by the deadline date, just before the beginning of the summer vacation. Administrators were queried on how they made decisions, on options they took for implementation, on their familiarity with state guidelines, on whether they followed a written material selection policy, and on the rationale for their choice. Questionnaires for teachers sought to elicit responses on their evaluation of TV as a learning tool in terms of student knowledge of current events, on whether they would recommend it to colleagues, on whether they required students to pay attention, on whether they used it as a basis of classroom discussion about current events, and on how they integrated the program into the curriculum. Questionnaires requested students to respond to items concerning their attention to the programs, their assessment of their learning, the integration of programs into classroom discussions, their non-classroom sources of news, and their attention to commercials. All respondents were requested to provide any comments they wished in spaces provided or on the backs of the survey forms.

All principals involved, four in Channel One schools and three in CNN Newsroom schools, responded to the survey instruments. All thirty-five teachers responded. CNN Newsroom, used only with particular social studies classes, involved just three teachers, one in each school. Thirty-two teachers, representing a variety of subjects. Thirty-two teachers, representing a variety of subjects, responded for Channel One. Nine taught social studies, although our promise of anonymity did not allow us to distinguish them except for three who voluntarily put their names on the survey forms. A total of 699 students, 523 from Channel One schools and 176 from CNN schools, responded. Some students did not reply, chiefly because the mid-May distribution of the surveys included periods where student absences, field trips and other activities contributed to less than full attendance. The responding students, however, constituted more than 92 percent of those involved in one or the other programs. The responding students constituted approximately 40 percent of all

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students enrolled in the schools; several students in the schools did not view either program.

Results

In some tables we have used absolute figures for frequency of responses and in others percentages. In tables illustrating teachers' responses, we have avoided using percentages. The low number of teachers in our seven district universe—only one teacher in each of the CNN schools and one teacher in one of the four Channel One schools—can mislead unless always kept in mind.

Implementation

In CNN Newsroom schools, two principals reported the program to be in use for two years and one reported it to be in use for three. As Table 1 indicates, administrators in two of the districts with schools using CNN decided to use the program on the basis of teacher requests. In the other CNN district, use was based primarily on a board decision, although teachers played a role in indicating their desire for the program. All responding principals claimed to be influenced by the belief that CNN Newsroom was an "innovative educational tool." Two noted the quality of the programs. State rules and guidelines appeared to play no strong part in selection. No principal was completely aware of state guidelines, although two acknowledged being "somewhat" familiar. Two reported the district did not use the material selection policy in choosing the programs.

All principals of schools using Channel One admitted the enticement of free equipment. Their comments revealed frequent use of the equipment for various other curricular objectives. Curiously, in view of Channel One's purposes, two schools failed to get the full complement of equipment necessary to link all classes, but the principals still expressed gratitude for what they received. Other reasons than free equipment noted by principals as a basis for selecting Channel One included recommendations of other administrators, although these recommendations may very well have been related to the equipment. Three of the four principals, moreover, noted Channel One's use as an "innovative educational tool." Overall, equipment may have played a larger role in choice than instructional potential of the programs, as suggested by the wide variety of non-academic classroom settings in which the programs took place.

Two principals reported that their school boards made the decision to use Channel One, and in one case the principal made a unilateral decision, although he later sought concurrence with the district administrator and the board, as he would have to do, given the contractual nature of the use of Channel One. A committee took part in one case. Teachers as a group appeared to play no direct part. Curricular selection policy was not a prominent factor. Opposition to Channel One by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the attacks on it by the then-state superintendent did not seem to deter districts from choosing to use the program. In fact, like CNN districts, the Channel One districts appeared to pay little attention to state guidelines in general.

Delivery

As noted, schools receiving CCN Newsroom through local television cable companies make no commitment to the Turner Broadcasting System, sign no contracts, and show the program as they see fit. The percentage of students watching in each CNN school

TABLE 1

Program Implementation: Administrators' Responses, by Program Used

Attitude	Channels Used	
	CNN (n=3)	Ch. 1 (n=4)
Familiar with State Policy Regarding Ch. One and CNN?		
Yes, aware	0	1
Somewhat familiar	2	1
No, not familiar with state guidelines	1	2
Use written material selection policy used in arrive at decision to choose particular program?		
Yes	1	2
No	2	2
How was decision reached to use particular type of news carrier?		
Committee recommendation	0	1
Unilateral administrative decision	0	1
Board decision	1	2
Teacher request	2	0
Other	0	0
What influenced district to implement news programs? (Multiple responses allowed)		
Free hardware/satellite dish/wiring	0	4
Recommendations of fellow educators	0	3
Quality of programming	2	0
Considered innovative educational tool	3	3
Additional channels offered	0	1
Other	1	0

investigated in this study was 22, 19, and 55, respectively. All three schools with CNN Newsroom delivered the program in an academic setting, typically in two or three sections of social studies. The decision to use CNN Newsroom rested solely with each classroom teacher, and the frequency of program use varied at the discretion of the teacher. Two teachers claimed to use the program every day, while a third claimed to use it only one or two days a week.

All three teachers using CNN Newsroom claimed that they required their students to pay attention "always" (see Table 2). Although students revealed somewhat less overall attention than their teachers' requirements may have implied, students did register a fairly high level of attention, with approximately 74 percent claiming to pay attention "always" or "most of the time" during the entire program (see Table 3).

Student attention often may be associated with integration of the program into classroom activities. Perceptions of integration differed between teachers and students, with teachers claiming to use the broadcasts more often than students believed they were used. In one school, the divergence between the teacher and the students was especially notable. The teacher reported that classroom discussion of televised news "always or usually" took place, but only a third of the students agreed, with more than a third reporting no discussion at all.

The frequency of classes also led to differing recollections. In the school in which students reported the lowest attention, only 11 percent agreed with the teacher that classes occurred every day. Students largely agreed with the two other teachers, one of whom indicated giving classes every day and the other, 1-2 days a week. All teachers reported always or usually giving the programs from beginning to end, and all programs took place in academic classrooms, where they comprised part of the social studies curriculum. Confusion over academic classrooms that also served as homeroom or study hall led 5 percent of students to note the latter rooms as place of class, but investigation revealed the rooms were used only when they served as academic classrooms.

With respect to integrating the material through discussion, all of the CNN teachers discussed the material "always or usually." The students, although clearly recognizing that substantive discussion did occur, reported less discussion, with only 29 percent agreeing on "always or usually" and 61 percent opting for "some of the time."

Not limited to social studies classes, Channel One was more widely viewed than CNN Newsroom. In the schools utilizing Channel One, student participation was, respectively, 23 percent, 46 percent, and 70 percent. In schools where Channel One provided sufficient television monitors and teachers showed the program, students viewed it in a study hall, a homeroom, a lunchroom, or an academic class. In those schools that had not yet received sufficient equipment, only a fraction of the student body watched the program, at one site on an occasional basis in an academic class and at another in several available homerooms. In only one Channel One school—the one in which one teacher taught all classes using the program—was Channel One restricted to academic classes.

Sixty percent of teachers using Channel One noted they made students pay attention always or usually and 79 percent reported they always or usually discussed issues in class (see Table 2). Students, however, were even less likely than their peers in CNN schools to acknowledge their own attention or recognition of discussion (see Table 3). Only 22 percent acknowledged paying attention always or usually and only 12 percent reported discussing issues always or usually. Even more indicative, perhaps, of a certain malaise with respect to the programs was the fact that more than a third of the students indicated

TABLE 2

Delivery of Programs: Teachers' Responses. by Program and School

	Number Responding, by School								
	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	*C*	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/number	1	1	1	3	1	10	7	14	32
Require attention?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	4	4	10	19
Some of time	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	7
Never	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Discussed in class?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	6	7	11	25
Some of time	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	5
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
How often given?									
Every day	1	0	1	2	0	4	4	8	16
3-4 days a week	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
1-2 days a week	0	1	0	1	0	5	3	3	11
Fewer than 1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
No response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Beginning to end?									
Always or usually	1	1	1	3	1	5	4	10	20
Only sometime	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	4
Never	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	5
No response	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2

TABLE 3

Delivery of Programs: Students' Responses, by Program and School

	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/number	55	42	79	176	41	174	142	166	523
Pay attention									
Always or usually	83	93	57	74	92	14	25	30	22
Some of time	15	7	34	22	7	33	39	48	40
Never	2	0	9	5	0	53	35	23	37
Discussed									
Always or usually	36	50	14	29	76	9	3	10	12
Some of time	60	45	71	61	22	17	43	46	34
Never	4	3	15	9	0	75	53	45	54
How often given									
Every day, week	82	0	11	31	0	24	70	54	48
3-4 days a week	18	24	41	30	0	7	1	7	6
1-2 days a week	0	76	42	37	94	20	11	15	24
Fewer than 1	0	0	6	3	6	48	17	19	22
Where given									
Homeroom	3	2	1	3	0	72	13	18	34
Lunchroom	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	7
Academic class	95	98	96	96	100	0	8	3	17
Study hall, other	2	0	0	1	0	26	18	78	40

never paying attention and more than a half indicated that there was no discussion of the programs. One teacher clearly agreed with the students' perceptions, revealing also that administrators' oversight of delivery could be somewhat haphazard. She or he noted, "I haven't used [Channel One] in classroom discussion. I didn't know I was supposed to."

Although most students and teachers agreed that programs were given at least three days a week, they diverged in responding fewer than one time a week, with students reporting this frequency far more often than teachers. Curiously, however, the difference

between teachers and students was basically caused by one school in which 48 percent of students but no teacher reported less than a day, although one half of the teachers did acknowledge only 1-2 days a week. Frequency of use did not necessarily indicate greater attention, however. In one school with a low frequency of classes, both the teachers and the students believed attention was high and discussions were reasonably frequent. It must be noted that classes in this school, all taught by one teacher (who identified herself as a social studies teacher) took place in academic classrooms.

Value of the Programs

Students in CNN schools and Channel One schools resembled each other in their exposure to outside news sources (see Table 4). Newspapers did not play a major role in students' perceived acquisition of knowledge. In fact few students took much time to watch TV news or read newspapers. Radio, selected by many students as their major source of information, hardly provided any more than brief reports. The proportion of CNN students who selected that program given in the school as the "best source of current events information" was relatively small, 17 percent, although more than twice as large as those Channel One students selecting their school program over outside sources.

All CNN teachers found value in the program. Two agreed that it was a "beneficial teaching tool" and that it definitely contributed to student knowledge of geography and current events (see Table 5). They would "strongly recommend" it to colleagues. Although not quite as enthusiastic, the other teacher declared it "sometimes" a beneficial teaching tool, would "recommend" it (although not strongly) to colleagues, and felt that it at least "sometimes" contributed to students' knowledge.

How did the teachers' assessment of learning compare with students' assessment? Table 6 indicates responses of both groups to questions concerning student learning. Even though some students felt discussion was limited, students in general reflected fairly high agreement with teachers hat they learned "something important" always or usually. The lowest proportion of agreement about learning, 58 percent, came from the school in which student attention, a virtually duplicative 57 percent, also was somewhat lower than in other schools. Few students in this school agreed with their teacher that discussion always occurred.

We have already noted administrators' support for Channel One, and all the districts using it, like those using CNN Newsroom, continued using it the following year. Teachers in Channel One schools did not exhibit great enthusiasm, although a majority attributed some value to it. As Table 5 shows, a third would not recommend it to colleagues and another third would recommend it only with reservations. Only two of the 32 Channel One teachers, in contrast to two of the three CNN Newsroom teachers, would strongly recommend it. Several teachers deprecated the value of the programs. One wrote, without explaining the basis for comparison, "CNN is a better program!" Another stated, "I've found that this news is 'old news' and the students already know about it." A third comment: "The students, as a group, haven't been interested. They tune it out."

Yet at least 50 percent of teachers in one Channel One school and 72 percent in others did find the programs a "beneficial teaching tool" (see Table 5). Moreover two thirds of teachers in all schools—a majority in three—believed that students "learned something important" at least some of the time. In one school, however, a majority of teachers disagreed, expressing the view that students "never" learned anything important.

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TABLE 4

Students' Non-School Source of News, by Program

Outside Source	% CNN (*n*=176)	% Ch 1 (*n*=523)
Watch national and international news on regular television network in your home?		
5-7 days a week	10	16
3-4 days a week	25	23
1-2 days a week	40	34
Never	24	28
Read national and international news in a daily newspaper?		
5-7 days a week	10	13
3-4 days a week	17	14
1-2 days a week	38	33
Never	36	40
Best daily source of current events information?		
Radio news	39	33
Television news	28	35
Newspapers	14	16
CNN Newsroom	17	0
Channel One	0	8
Other	3	8

In response to the question of whether they had "learned something important," only 30 percent of Channel One students, compared to 71 percent of CNN students, responded "always or usually" (See Table 6). Similar percentages characterized students responding "only some of the time" or "never." In contrast to CNN students, who rarely provided comments—and when they did they were positive—Channel One students freely expressed views, always negative, about the reporters, the language, the content of the program, and the time it wasted. One wrote: "Channel One is the most worthless, least informative 'news' program which I ever had the misfortune to watch. I feel that the news announcers are trying too hard to be 'cool' and make stupid jokes that they are trying to report facts and current news.... They also tend to speak in some sort of street 'jive' which is occasionally difficult to understand." Another student criticized the reporters' style. "The reporters are too fake and the stories are about things I don't care about...." One student

TABLE 5

Teachers' Responses: Value of Programs, by Program and School

	Number Responding, By School								
	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response/Number	1	1	1	3	1	10	7	14	32
Beneficial tchg tool?									
Yes	1	0	1	2	0	1	2	4	7
Sometimes	0	1	0	1	1	4	4	7	16
No	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	2	8
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Rec to colleagues?									
Strongly recom	1	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	1
Recommend	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	4	8
With reservations	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	7	11
Would not recom	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	2	10
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Contr to Student Knowl of geog, current events?									
Yes	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	7	11
Sometimes	0	1	0	1	1	3	4	7	15
No	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	5
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1

TABLE 6

Students' Responses: Learning, by Program and School

	CNN Schools				Channel One Schools				
	A	B	C	All	D	E	F	G	All
Response	*n*=55	*n*=42	*n*=79	*n*=176	*n*=41	*n*=174	*n*=142	*n*=166	*n*=523
Learn something important									
Always or usually	91	69	58	71	90	15	27	34	30
Only some time	7	31	35	25	7	30	37	47	36
Never	2	2	6	4	2	54	35	20	35

would "sue" the school if the program was not "out" by the next school year. Another: "I would rather watch MTV! Keep it off."

Several students appeared angry that Channel One was taking away from time they would have used for study. Said one: "I don't think we should have to watch it [Channel One] in a study hall." Another: "Channel One is very stupid. It wastes 15 valuable minutes of study time!" Still another: "I feel that Channel One is…worthless because it takes up too much time during my study halls…."

Clearly, the location and type of the class played a large part in students' evaluation of their attention and their time spent in discussion. Location and type of class also corresponded, although often less distinctly, to teachers' attitudes on attention, the benefits of Channel One as a teaching tool, and its contribution to student learning. The students with the most negative attitude toward their learning attended the school in which all of them viewed Channel One in either home rooms, study halls, or the lunchroom. Students with the most positive view toward learning attended classes in the academic classroom, part of a social studies class, given by one teacher. Ninety percent of these students believed they learned something important always or usually, far more than those in the other schools, where classes were not given as part of academic classes at all or were given only in a couple of instances. The students believed they learned (as well as usually discussed issues and gave attention) even though classes were given at most two days a week and the teacher, although remaining positive, had some doubts about learning efficacy. In this class students' perception of learning, if not the teacher's, exceeded those of many counterparts in the CNN school, revealing virtually the same responses as those given by students in the CNN school whose students displayed the most positive attitude of those manifested in CNN schools.

What part did commercials play? In their choices to continue using the Channel One programs, administrators manifested the attitude that commercials did not seriously impair the benefits of the program. By their willingness, however muted, to recommend programs to colleagues, a majority of teachers seemed to discount the baneful influences of

commercials. Despite Channel One students' alacrity in discussing their views on the overall aspects of the program, they did not volunteer comments on commercials. They did, however, respond to relevant items on the survey, displaying attitudes somewhat more negative than positive, as indicated in Table 7. Only 38 percent of students responded "yes" or "sometimes" to feeling like buying any of the products advertised in the commercials. Curiously, however, students in the schools in which students believed they learned the most expressed stronger feeling about wishing to buy materials advertised—some 49 percent responded "yes" or "sometimes" when asked about feeling like buying any of the products advertised by commercials— than students whose attitude toward learning ranged from somewhat less enthusiastic to entirely negative. The students who displayed the most negative attitude toward their learning transferred that attitude to commercials evidently, with only 27 percent responding "yes" or "sometimes."

Discussion

Schools using CNN Newsroom and those using Channel One differed considerably in implementing programs. The CNN schools tended to use the programs with active teachers' involvement in choice and administrators' strong belief in the quality of the program. The Channel One schools' decisions rested more with the administration and board, with teacher requests playing no obvious part, perhaps an inevitable consequence of contract requirements. For neither Channel One nor CNN Newsroom, however, did state requirements seem to carry much importance, even though the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction explicitly opposed Channel One. Although administrators in Channel One schools and CNN Newsroom schools noted the importance of the program as an innovative tool, the free equipment in Channel One constituted a prime reason for its choice.

Although students experiencing both CNN Newsroom and Channel One tended to look at the programs in a different light than their teachers did—a feature of the teaching-learning situation in general—there is no doubt that schools tended to deliver the programs differently. The CNN news programs took place in academic classroom settings, conducted by social studies teachers. Although regular academic classroom settings at specific times occurred for all classes in one Channel One school and occasional ones in others, the majority of classes took place in study halls or homerooms and at various times. The Channel One students viewing the courses in these conditions often had little opportunity for discussion and little reason to give attention.

The way in which the Channel One program was implemented and delivered related strongly to its impact. The program's rather haphazard use stands out. Part of the problem rested with Channel One suppliers, who provided an insufficient number of monitors to schools. But even when equipment was adequate, some administrators—and some teachers—seemed more interested in securing it for purposes other than its designed goal of making Channel One an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Once the equipment was received, the program's educational goal seemed to have been ignored in several schools. When the equipment itself constitutes the main reason for selection, of course, the program's use may become an actual detriment to learning, a condition most clearly epitomized by complaints of students about the elimination of their time for study in study halls. The indifference with which equipment was sometimes used, as well as the insufficiency of equipment for some schools, shows the fantasy of the 90 percent time requirement enunciated in Channel One policy. The possibility exists, however, that when the program's use proved dysfunctional to learning, the sometimes extensive non-program uses of the equipment, counterbalanced the harm.

TABLE 7

Channel One Students' Responses to Commercials

	Percentage Responding, by School				
Response	D	E	F	G	All
Pay attention?					
Always	15	8	4	8	7
Most of the time	39	9	20	18	17
Only some of the time	34	28	44	46	39
Never	12	49	30	28	35
No response	0	6	3	0	3
Annoying or boring?					
Yes	12	28	27	25	26
Sometimes	44	30	48	42	40
No	34	17	17	23	20
Not sure	10	19	6	8	11
No response	0	6	2	1	3
Interesting, informative?					
Yes	15	9	4	11	9
Sometimes	46	26	40	40	36
No	27	40	46	41	41
Not sure	12	19	8	8	12
No response	0	7	2	0	3
Feel like buying any of the products advertised					
Yes	5	8	7	10	8
Sometimes	44	19	39	26	29
No	37	51	44	51	48
Not sure	15	16	7	13	13
No response	0	5	3	0	2

As Johnston et al. (1994) noted, the value of programs seemed to be related to the place of delivery. The overall differences between Channel One and CNN masked the fact that when Channel One students received their programs in academic classrooms, they had a positive perception of their learning. It appears that if Channel One could be used only in academic classrooms, presumably with interested teachers, its overall value to students as a news provider would be higher than it now is.

The question of overall value must be addressed in relation to the importance of news. Students revealed that only a small portion—less for viewers of Channel One than for those of CNN Newsroom—of their information on current events came from their in-school programs. Evidence suggests, however, that if the news is integrated into the curriculum the students may increase their understanding of current affairs. The programs cannot provide a wide breadth any more than they can substitute for enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers, but they can serve as a vehicle for looking at certain issues in depth. Unfortunately, understanding news in depth does not characterize most Americans, who have never distinguished themselves by their knowledge of current affairs (Della Carpini & Keeter, 1991). Surveys by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press reveal a largely uninformed public. In 1994, only 28 percent of Americans knew the name of the "ethnic group with which the Israelis recently reached a peace accord," only 50 percent identified the president of Russia, and only 13 percent identified Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Hillary Who? 1994). In 1995, a Times survey indicated that only 30 percent of people followed reports about the economy, major Supreme Court decisions, race and gender issues, and major scientific events (Superville, 1995). Certainly, if one accepts the proposition that citizens' knowledge of current affairs is important to a democracy and that the interrelations among nations require more knowledge than ever before, one must hope that any means of increasing students' knowledge will have a beneficial effect.

Although CNN Newsroom generally has evaded charges of bias for its school presentations per se—if not for its regular news—Channel One incurred accusations of bias by people representing different ends of the political spectrum. News from any source often reflects ideological orientations of writers and producers, and any single source of news may skew information in particular ways. Even though no complaints of bias emerged in comments from teachers or students, its existence cannot be denied. Family and associates have a much more influential role in molding students' attitudes than schools do (Koch, 1995; Yeric & Todd, 1989, pp. 45-46), but in areas where knowledge or salience of particular issues is low, the media may have a significant impact (Goidel & Langley, 1995). For this reason, the concept of instructing students in media literacy has drawn considerable attention (Conover, 1996).

Ideological influence, nevertheless, may be exerted through books and teacher activities in general to which students may be exposed far more intensively and over a longer period than they are by news broadcasts. Ideally, students should be trained to detect attempts to influence them for any reason, political, social, or commercial, and teachers should make an attempt to provide critical observation tools to students. Failure of students to receive adequate instruction in interpreting messages reflects a problem that may never be solved completely. The existence of the problem, however, does not justify the censorship of news coming into the classroom.

It cannot be denied that commercials present to young people an idealized view of products, an often blatant counterpart of bias in the news itself. Sponsors would not pay fees to Channel One if they did not expect commercials to influence buying decisions. Although many students in the Channel One schools tended to look negatively at the commercials shown, those Channel One-viewing students who gave the most attention to academic material also gave the most attention to the commercials. Probably, the mindset

created by the learning environment of classroom carried over into observation of commercials. In classes given in study halls and home rooms at odd times, the students' concentration on commercials became as weak as concentration on subject matter. Yet how dangerous were the commercials? By and large teachers and administrators in this study concurred with those in the study of Johnston et al. (1994) in believing commercials to be a fair trade-off for other benefits of Channel One. Free equipment that can be used for various purposes contributed to this view, but overall the acceptability of commercials may have been more closely related to the ubiquity of commercials and advertisements in general.

By the time students are eighteen, they probably have viewed some 200,000 commercials, according to Frank Mankiewicz, of Hill and Knowlton Public Affairs Worldwide (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1991, p. 52). Wulfemeyer & Mueller (1991) have estimated that students have probably seen 1,000,000 advertisements. Advertisements are displayed in various places in schools. With respect to television commercials, children in rural areas may actually tend to watch more TV than children elsewhere (Sun, Hobbs, Elder & Li, 1994), thus increasing their exposure to commercials. Consequently commercials in the classroom hardly reflect propaganda reaching unsuspecting victims. In a classroom, where commercials constitute part of a regular course, they are viewed in an atmosphere where some informed criticism can develop—as noted, growing attention is given to media reporting (Conover, 1996)—even if it does not always do so.

A final observation concerns the rural nature of the schools in this study. Did any findings appear to be influenced by the rural location? Did actions or responses of administrators, teachers, or students differ from those of others studied as a result of the location of the districts. A definite answer to these questions cannot be given for either CNN or Channel One.

Occasional comments of students about the speech of the Channel One reporters suggests that the language of urban areas could be dysfunctional in certain rural areas, at least when it is used in news reportage. Although it might be argued that an understanding of terms and phrases used elsewhere increased rural students' knowledge of society, the use of language that is not understood or is resented as patronizing may contribute to its rejection. Even if students have heard the language in the context of entertainment, such as that supplied by MTV and various situation comedies, they may not accept it as part of news broadcasts, the purpose of which is so different, unless a teacher can articulate the broadcasts with an academic purpose. The differentiation of language according to context may reflect a tendency of individuals, noted by Cyert and March (1964), to see the same situation differently, depending on whether it is seen alone or simultaneously with other situations. Still, varying responses to different styles of speech hardly constitute a phenomenon limited to urban-rural differences.

The importance of equipment, as manifested in school districts that chose Channel One, seems extremely high. Yet this desire for equipment reflects limited resources rather than any rural characteristic, since lack of resources in urban districts seems to have produced the same attraction (Celano & Neuman, 1994).

In one respect, however, the findings of the study suggest a relationship between the rural setting of the schools and the use of Channel One. The remoteness of rural schools may have allowed them to deviate considerably from the guidelines presented by Channel One for using the broadcasts. In part, the deviation may reflect the relatively informal structure of authority in small, rural districts in contrast to urban and suburban districts, resulting in more flexible adherence to rules and regulations in general (Wahlstrom & Louis, 1993), regardless of source. More important, however, may have

been the distance of the source of rules, allowing a comfort zone for independent action by the districts. Not only the districts' deviation from rules, but also the inadequate supply of equipment by Channel One may have resulted from the relative inaccessibility of the area.

Although the limited geographic and demographic context of this study clearly makes generalization highly speculative, the comparative approach, juxtaposing the two types of programs, should be applied to a wide variety of schools in various locations. The comparative approach provides a perspective that cannot be acquired by studies of single programs, either CNN or Channel One.

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